

RESTORING THE BROKEN

A Study of Ezra and Nehemiah

4

Zechariah 1—8

Because we will be covering eight chapters this week, be sure to allow yourself extra time to complete this lesson.

Buckle up! You are about to embark on a jet tour of the first half of the book written by Zechariah, a prophet who spoke to the remnant in Jerusalem. Zechariah was a young man (Zec. 2:4) who had been born to a priestly family during exile. The word of the Lord came to him 18 years after the exiles had returned, during the period when work on the temple had ceased. His ministry overlapped with Haggai's.


Instead of reading the whole passage all at once, read each section as you come to it in the lesson below.

1. **Read Zechariah 1:1-6.** With what warning and invitation does Zechariah's ministry begin?

On a single night, Zechariah is given eight visions. Though strange, these visions are meant to encourage the people during a time when work on the temple has ceased, enemies are seeking to discourage them, and the people are preoccupied with work on their own houses. We will not focus on all the details of the visions in this study but instead will look for the main messages God wants to communicate to his people through them.

2. **Read the FIRST VISION: The Man Among the Myrtle Trees (1:7-17).**¹



The Lord was angry with his people for 70 years. What word of encouragement does he now speak to them? (1:14-17)

3. **Read the SECOND VISION: Four Horns and Four Craftsmen (1:18-21).** What message of hope does this vision of the horns and craftsmen offer? (1:21;  * 2 Cor. 10:3-5)

HORNS AND CRAFTSMEN

While it isn't clear exactly who the horns and craftsmen represent in this vision, we can see that the horns represent those who oppose God and his people and the craftsmen are those who are used to destroy the power and pride of the oppressors.


4. **Read the THIRD VISION: A Man With a Measuring Line** (2:1-13).

- a. What is unusual about Jerusalem in this vision? (2:3-5)
- b. What tender image does the Lord Almighty use to describe his relationship with his people? (2:8;  Deut. 32:9-10)
- c. What does God promise? (2:10-12;  Mt. 1:23)

A MAN WITH A MEASURING LINE

This vision “relates first of all to the return from exile and the completion of the Temple, but it goes beyond these events in its assurance that the nations will experience God’s power and acknowledge His Lordship.”²

5. **Read the FOURTH VISION: Clean Garments for the High Priest** (3:1-10).

- a. Joshua,³ the high priest, is dressed in filthy clothes. What does the clothing represent and how is it dealt with? (3:3-4;  Is. 64:6; Is. 1:18; 1 Jn. 1:7)
- b. What greater work does the Lord Almighty promise to do? (3:8-10)

6. **Read the FIFTH VISION: The Golden Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees** (4:1-14).

Remember the challenges the people faced in rebuilding the temple. Write down the hopeful messages the Lord now gives to both Zerubbabel and the people. (4:6-14)

OLIVE TREES



“In the immediate context [the two olive branches] must be Joshua and Zerubbabel, the religious and civil heads of the nation.”⁴

7. **Read the SIXTH VISION: The Flying Scroll** (5:1-4).


What judgment is declared for those who violate God’s law? (5:3-4)

THE FLYING SCROLL

“Every one who steals is a pithy way of saying ‘every one who wrongs his neighbor,’ and every one who swears falsely (invoking the divine name) sums up blatant disregard for God’s holiness.”⁵ So this scroll seems to be an indictment against those who break the greatest commandments of loving God and loving one’s neighbor (Mt. 22:37-38).

8. **Read the SEVENTH VISION: The Woman in a Basket (5:5-11).**
 - a. What is exposed when the lid of the basket is lifted? (5:7-8)
 - b. What does this vision demonstrate about God's power over wickedness? (See also Zec. 3:9b;  Rev. 20:7-10)
9. **Read the EIGHTH VISION: Four Chariots (6:1-8).**
 In visions 6-8 God is seen dealing with sin and wickedness. In this last vision what indicates that this work will one day be fully and finally completed? (6:8;  Heb. 10:11-14)
10. If you were one of the remnant, what message from these visions would be most meaningful to you and why?

Read Zechariah 6:9-15.

11. In chapter 4, where Joshua and Zerubbabel were represented as olive branches, they were "men symbolic of things to come" (Zec. 3:8).
 - a. In 6:12-13 we read that Joshua's name is the Branch, and he is described as "a priest on his throne" – a combination of priest and king. Whom does Joshua point forward to in this passage? (Lk. 1:31-32; Heb. 4:14;  Is. 11:1-5, 10-11)
 - b. This prophecy speaks of the physical temple God's people were rebuilding. But in the New Testament, believers are called the "temple of the living God" (2 Cor. 6:16), and the apostle Peter says that believers, "like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2:5). What should characterize this living temple, those in whom God lives by his Spirit? (Zec. 6:15b; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 Pet. 2:9-12)

Read Zechariah 7.

In this chapter the word of the Lord comes two years after the night of visions. A delegation comes "questioning the need, now that the Temple is almost rebuilt, to keep the fasts which commemorated the fall of Jerusalem."⁶


12. As in Isaiah's time (Is. 58:2-7), the people of Zechariah's time need to be corrected in their understanding about what true fasting is in God's sight. What should true fasting look like in God's people? (Zec. 7:8-9; Is. 58:6-7)

Read Zechariah 8. (Note: Zion is another name for Jerusalem.)

In this chapter, "It is as though God can no longer bear the estrangement from His people brought about by their obstinacy. Though they are not truly seeking Him now, even in their fasts, His depth of feeling for them wells up in action on their behalf."⁷

13. Seventeen times in this chapter God is referred to as the Lord Almighty.
- What will characterize Jerusalem when the Lord Almighty comes to dwell in her? (Scan through chapter 8.)
 - How should this vision of the Lord Almighty and Jerusalem encourage the people to get back to the task of completing the temple?
14. How have the descriptions in Zechariah of God's affection and care for his people – as well as God's promises to send Jesus – encouraged you?

This study has been adapted and expanded with permission from a study of the same name by Bridge Community Church, Phila., PA.

* For further study

¹The titles of these visions are from the NIV translation.

²Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, ed. D. J. Wiseman (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1972), 112.

³In Ezra the high priest Joshua is called by his Aramaic name, Jeshua. *The NIV Study Bible, 10th Anniversary Edition*, ed. Kenneth Barker (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), note on 3:1, p. 1403.

⁴James Montgomery Boice. *The Minor Prophets: an Expositional Commentary, Micah – Malachi*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 511.

⁵Joyce G. Baldwin, "Zechariah," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary with the New International Version: Daniel and the Minor Prophets*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 633.

⁶Baldwin in Tyndale, 143.

⁷Baldwin in Tyndale, 149.